

Reckoning
External Reckoning
Joel 2:1-32

As we study the book of Joel, we are in a season of spiritual focus on confession and repentance of sin. To do so, we must get a clearer picture of what, exactly, is sin according to the scriptures.

Sin: Missing the mark, transgressing, overstepping limits. Sin is grounded in its opposition to God's person, character, & nature.

- **Origin of Sin:** In the Garden of Eden, God gave Adam and Eve a single prohibition...Don't eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Yet, that is exactly what they did. (Genesis 3)
- **Depth of Sin:** Every human being is born with a nature of sin, a propensity to sin, and is in slavery to sin. It's to the core! (Psalm 51)
- **Manifestation of Sin:** We are sinners by nature, but also sinners by choice. Sins of Commission, Omission, & Disposition. Sins in Words, Deeds, & Thoughts. (Romans 3)
- **Scope of Sin:** We are guilty of breaking the whole law... (James 2)
- **Root of Sin:** Lack of faith and trust in God is at the root of every sin.

"For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin." Romans 14:23

Reckoning: In this series from Today, Joel will describe an external reckoning in the form of an invading army, illustrating Four Parts of Sin...

- I. **The Results of Sin** – *"Blow a trumpet in Zion; sound an alarm on my holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming; it is near, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness! Like blackness there is spread upon the mountains a great and powerful people; their like has never been before, nor will be again after them through the years of all generations. Fire devours before them, and behind them a flame burns. The land is like the garden of Eden before them, but behind them a desolate wilderness, and nothing escapes them. Their appearance is like the appearance of horses, and like war horses they run. As with the rumbling of chariots, they leap on the tops of the mountains, like the crackling of a flame of fire devouring the stubble, like a powerful army drawn up for battle. Before them peoples are in anguish; all faces grow pale. Like warriors they charge; like soldiers they scale the wall. They march each on his way; they do not swerve from their paths. They do not jostle one another; each marches in his path; they burst through the weapons and are not halted. They leap upon the city, they run upon the walls, they climb up into the houses, they enter through the windows like a thief. The earth quakes before them; the heavens tremble. The sun and the moon are darkened, and the stars withdraw their shining. The LORD utters his voice before his army, for his camp is exceedingly great; he who executes his word is powerful. For the day of the LORD is great and very awesome; who can endure it?" Joel 2:1-11*

"The wages of sin is death..." Romans 6:23a

"Blow a trumpet in Zion; sound an alarm on my holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble..." Joel 2:1a

- II. **A Response to Sin** – *"Yet even now," declares the LORD, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your hearts and not your garments." Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and he relents over disaster. Who knows whether he will not turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind him, a grain offering and a drink offering for the LORD your God? Blow the trumpet in Zion; consecrate a fast; call a solemn assembly; gather the people. Consecrate the congregation; assemble the elders; gather the children, even nursing infants. Let the bridegroom leave his room, and the bride her chamber. Between the vestibule and the altar let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep and say, "Spare your people, O LORD, and make not your heritage a reproach, a byword among the nations. Why should they say among the peoples, "Where is their God?"" Joel 2:12-17*

"Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy." Proverbs 28:13

- III. **Restoration from Sin** – *"Then the LORD became jealous for his land and had pity on his people. The LORD answered and said to his people, "Behold, I am sending to you grain, wine, and oil, and you will be satisfied; and I will no more make you a reproach among the nations. I will remove the northerner far from you, and drive him into a parched and desolate land, his vanguard into the eastern sea, and his rear guard into the western sea; the stench and foul smell of him will rise, for he has done great things. "Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice, for the LORD has done great things! Fear not, you beasts of the field, for the pastures of wilderness are green; the tree bears its fruit; the fig tree and vine give their full yield. "Be glad, O children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God, for he has given the early rain for your vindication; he has poured down for you abundant rain, the early and the latter rain, as before. "The threshing floors shall be full of grain; the vats shall overflow with wine and oil. I will restore to you the years that the swarming locusts have eaten, the hopper, the destroyer, and the cutter, my great army, which is sent among you. You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD your God, who has dealt wondrously with you. And my people shall never again be put to shame. You shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the LORD your God and there is none else. And my people shall never again be put to shame." Joel 2:18-27*

"If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land." 2 Chronicles 7:14

"And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose." Romans 8:28

IV. **Reality After Sin** – “*And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophecy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even on the male and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit. And I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those who escape, as the LORD has said, and among the survivors shall be those whom the LORD calls.*” **Joel 2:28-32**

God’s overcoming of the sins of the world involves us. Joel pointed to a day in the future when God would work through an assembly of people known as the church.

“And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. And they were amazed and astonished, saying, ‘Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each one of us in his own native language...we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God.’ And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, ‘What does this mean?’ But others mocking said, ‘They are filled with new wine.’ But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: ‘Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. For these people are not drunk, as you supposed, since it is only the third hour of the day. But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel.” **Acts 2:6-8, 11b-16**

The amazing grace of God was never intended to be enjoyed by a few people. It was meant to be shared with the entire world! We cannot be guilty of keeping this amazing news of God’s redemption and restoration from sin to ourselves, we must share it with our neighbors, friends, coworkers, and family members.

“If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”
1 John 1:9

Confess, Mourn and Repent of Sin.

Sources and Further Reading Opportunities:

- *Bible Exposition Commentary* – Warren Wiersbe (1996)
- *IVP Bible Background Commentary* – Craig Keener (1993)
- *Tyndale Bible Dictionary* – Walter Elwell & P.W. Comfort (2001)
- *Joel: Only One Thing is Wrong* – J.D. Greear (2015)
- *Locust Hordes and the Day of the Lord* – John Piper (1982)
- *Prophet of Judgment* – Joseph Parker (1902)
- *The Minor Prophets* – James Montgomery Boice (2006)
- *Who will God Save: The Message of Joel* – Mark Dever (2003)
- *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* – Donald Whitney (1991)